

VZCZCXRO7423  
PP RUEHPA  
DE RUEHDK #1188/01 2901716  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 161716Z OCT 08  
FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1274  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS PRIORITY 0757

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 DAKAR 001188

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PARIS FOR POL D'ELIA AND DEA HOUSTON  
LAGOS FOR DEA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/06/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PU](#)  
SUBJECT: GUINEA BISSAU SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. An 25-26 August familiarization visit by the State Department AF/W desk officer to Bissau revealed in interviews defiance, optimism and some worry about the 16 November legislative elections, fighting drug trafficking and the influence of traffickers on national politics. Subsequent developments, notably the political parties' submission of candidate lists by the 16 September deadline, and Batista Tagme Na Wae's declaration that as long as he is the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff there will be no coup d'etat in Guinea-Bissau, confirm this course of events. Most sources interviewed thought the elections would proceed on that day despite severe underfunding. The three chief figures in the fight against cocaine smuggling through Bissau waterways and airports, the Minister of Justice, the Attorney General and the chief of the Judicial Police, betrayed no sign of being intimidated by the traffickers and their local confederates, or of giving up the fight. The Attorney General sees no connecting for the moment at least between drug trafficking and terrorism in his country. Escorting Dakar Emboff conveyed Ambassador's strong support for their efforts. END SUMMARY.

NOVEMBER LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS: FULL SPEED AHEAD NO MATTER WHAT?

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¶2. (C) The talk of Bissau, at least among the intelligentsia, is currently the legislative elections that were supposed to have been held in March 2008 but which were unconstitutionally postponed until November 2008. The capital has been swirling with speculation, fear of drug money influence and appeals for international help to minimize this influence. Carlos Gomes Jr. (& Cadogo Jr.8), leader of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), which emerged from a June party congress in strong alliance with the Guinea-Bissau President Joao Bernardo & Nino8 Vieira, expressed great confidence not only that the elections would occur but that the PAIGC would sweep the elections, despite strong pressure to postpone once again the elections due to very tardy preparation and to pressure from suddenly weakened ethnic Balanta political figures (of which more below).

¶3. (C) After some fears that parties would not register their candidates by the 16 September deadline and thereby call into question the date of the elections, 21 parties and two coalitions of small parties submitted their candidate lists on time. The PAIGC and Independent Republican Party for Development (PRID), submitted their lists accompanied by large crowds of supporters. Mohamed Yala Embalo's Social Renewal Party (PRS) and the United Social Democratic Party (PSUD) also submitted lists.

ELECTIONS ARE UNDERFUNDED

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¶4. (C) United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) Resrep Ambassador Shola Omoregie detailed the USD 4.315 million contributed thus far to

elections preparations and execution as funding and in-kind donations from: UNOGBIS (USD 1.3 million), ECOWAS (USD 0.5 million), Angola (USD 700,000), the EU (USD 850,000), the United Nations Development Program (USD 600,000), Portugal (material support), Brazil (USD 330,000) and Mexico (material support). Omoregie stated that USD 4.3 million more was needed to be raised to have fully funded elections not lacking in staffing and materials. Asked if the elections would go forward without funding, he said that they would.

#### WORRIES AND NO WORRIES ABOUT DRUG MONEY INFLUENCE ON ELECTIONS

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15. (C) For months analysts and observers have theorized about whether Latin American drug traffickers would influence the legislative elections by funding candidates in return for turning a blind eye to drug trafficking once they are elected. Gemima Neves, whose National Democratic Institute office in Bissau closed on 30 September due to lack of funding, expressed fear that the elections might be bought by drug money. Omoregie agreed, as did PAIGC leader Cadogo, Jr., the latter a partisan wont to identify the drug traffickers with the rival PRS party. By contrast, Attorney General Luis Cabral Manuel said that drug money will not influence the elections.

#### DRUG TRAFFICKING AND TERRORISM ARE PARALLEL, NOT CONVERGENT

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16. (C) Meanwhile, the war against drug trafficking by the plucky trio of Minister of Justice Carmelita Pires, Attorney General Manuel and Judicial Police Chief Lucinda Ahukarie continues with unprecedented vigor, even if it has a very long way to go before they can declare victory. Reftel

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details the grounding at Bissau International Airport of one of two airplanes in July that probably carried a large quantity of cocaine from Latin America to Europe and three Venezuelan crew who were arrested and then released by a corrupt judge who was thereafter suspended from duty. Minister Pires, sounding as if the wind were at her back, said that she expected to stay in office after the November elections. Judicial Police Chief Ahukarie said that 35 of her agents were to train in Brazil, that she was recruiting 100 agents, and made a passionate appeal to the USG to fund training. She concluded with the appeal to the USG to pressure President Vieira to make very strong statements against narco-trafficking. Attorney General Cabral related how he personally went out to the hapless plane to seize suspects and evidence, and how his wife refused to move with their children to Portugal after traffickers threatened his family. He states that he will fight as long as he is Attorney General. He expressed confidence in the PAIGC's ability to win a big majority in the November elections, and he expects to remain in office after the elections.

17. (C) In response to a question based on the arrest of two Mauritians in Bissau in January suspected of participating in the murder of four French tourists in Mauritania, one of whom swore vengeance against their captors in fluent Bissau-Guinean Criollo, Attorney General Cabral stated that he saw no evidence of collusion between terrorists and drug traffickers.

#### MORE VERSIONS OF THE FAILED COUP D'ETAT

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18. (C) Bissau is still talking about the unsuccessful coup d'etat of 7 August in which Navy head Rear Admiral Americo Bubo Na Tchuto attempted to arrest President Vieira. Most sources continue to indicate that Na Tchuto's arrest was the result of a power struggle between a strong chief of the armed forces Batista Tagme Na Wae and a weak President Vieira on the one hand and on the other hand, Bubo Na Tchuto, until then the strongest local ally of the narco-traffickers. The partisan PAIGC head Cadogo Jr. asserted that ex-president and PRS head Koumba Yala, recently converted to Islam and now known as Mohamed Yala Embalo, was behind the

coup. Embalo stated to a group of Muslims in the northeastern town of Gabu that he was greater than Amilcar Cabral, the nationally revered figure who led the war of independence from Portugal until he was assassinated in 1973.

Others assert that Embalo was Na Tchuto,s chief political prop, so that when the coup failed he had to flee back to Morocco. Some interviewees pointed out that Tagme, Bubo Na Tchuto and Yala Embalo are Balanta, as are the armed forces, predominantly. UNOGBIS head Omoregie (strictly protect) shrewdly suggested that Tagme, reputed to be the power behind the presidential throne, and Bubo No Tchuto conspired to overthrow Vieira, but that when Tagme was in Dakar, Bubo No Tchuto did not wait for Tagme to return to Bissau and launched the coup himself in order to take absolute power from Tagme and Vieira.

#### THE PEOPLE ARE MORE WORRIED ABOUT RICE THAN COCAINE

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19. (SBU) Voters would well define good governance by how well the people in power respond to the cost of living, which during the past 6 months has risen due to a 27%. The price of rice risen sharply. The current regime, however, is not at fault for this, but has been blamed for it by an opposition who said it will reduce prices if elected.

#### A SMALL BUT REAL WIND BEHIND THE BACKS OF THE GOOD GUYS

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110. (C) COMMENT. The public, be it in Bissau or in the provinces, is by no means as passionate about the elections as party activists, and may indeed firstly vote for the party they think will be able to govern best, among parties which are decidedly not ideological in nature, and secondly, for the parties they have supported in the past. However, the one party that has lost a following is the Balanta-based PRS.

In declaring during the 10-12 September visit by the Portuguese defense minister to Bissau that as long as he is chief of the Bissau-Guinean armed forces, Tagme Na Wae will tolerate no coup d'etats, the country can probably look forward to a short term of political stability, even if it needs the legitimacy of functioning democratic institutions for stability in the medium and long run.

111. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED. Mission Dakar Ambassador,s pledge to the Minister of Justice, Attorney General and the Judicial Police Chief through these Department visitors that the USG will do all it can to support the country in its fight against its drug scourge was another smooth stone laid

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in the counter-narcotics foundation being built in  
Guinea-Bissau. END COMMENT  
SMITH